

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 178782
ORIGIN EA-09

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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FOR AMBASSADOR CARTER

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PORG, TH

SUBJECT:THAI POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

SUMMARY: THE THAI EMBASSY HAS PRESENTED THE DEPARTMENT
AN AIDE MEMOIRE WHICH OUTLINES THE THAI POSITION ON HUMAN
RIGHTS. MAJOR POINTS ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW FOR YOUR
INFORMATION. END SUMMARY.

1. MIN COUNS OF THAI EMBASSY, CALLED ON DEPT JULY 28 TO
DELIVER AIDE MEMOIRE OUTLINING THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S
POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS. MIN COUNS SAID THAT THE
INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC ASIA AND THE ASIAN
STUDENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAD SENT MESSAGES TO THE UNITED
NATIONS COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN GENEVA REGARDING THE
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PAGE 02 STATE 178782

CASE OF SUTHAM SAENPRATHUM, A THAI STUDENT ARRESTED DURING
THE VIOLENCE AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY ON OCTOBER 6, 1976.
HE NOTED THAT THE MESSAGE WOULD BE CONSIDERED AT THE AUGUST
1-2 SESSION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS IN
GENEVA AND ASKED THAT THE U.S. DELEGATE SUPPORT THE THAI
POSITION. WE HAVE INFORMED THE THAI EMBASSY THAT WE ARE
CONVEYING A SUMMARY OF THE AIDE MEMOIRE TO GENEVA BUT THAT

MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP SERVE AS INDIVIDUALS IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITIES AND NOT AS INSTRUCTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

2. FYI: OUR EMBASSY IN BANGKOK HAS PREVIOUSLY EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE PERSONS WHO WERE ARRESTED AT THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY ON OCTOBER 6, 1976. THE RTG HAS ASSURED US THAT NORMAL THAI LEGAL PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED FOR THOSE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. SUMMARY JUSTICE UNDER ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONSTITUTION WILL NOT BE EMPLOYED, AND THE COURTROOM WILL BE OPEN TO BOTH PRESS AND PUBLIC. AN OFFICER FROM EMBASSY BANGKOK WILL BE PRESENT.

3. FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR POINTS FROM AIDE MEMOIRE:

--THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WAS ALTERED SIGNIFICANTLY AT THE END OF THE INDOCHINA WAR. BY OCTOBER 1976 THAILAND WAS FACED WITH POLITICAL INSTABILITY, GOVERNMENT PARALYSIS, AND A LARGE-SCALE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE AND CIVIL DISTURBANCE WHICH, IF PERMITTED TO CONTINUE, WOULD JEOPARDIZE THAILAND'S NATIONAL SECURITY.

--THE THAI PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES UNDER THE LAW ARE GUARANTEED BY THE CONSTITUTION. HOWEVER, UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, CERTAIN TEMPORARY LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES HAVE BEEN TAKEN. UNDER DECREE 22, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 178782

CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF VIOLATIONS, MOSTLY CRIMINAL, CAN RESULT IN ARREST AND DETENTION WITHOUT RECOURSE TO NORMAL THAI LEGAL PROCEDURES.

--DURING THE CIVIL DISTURBANCE PRECEDING THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, 3,154 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED UNDER DUE PROCESS OF LAW. ALL BUT 74 HAVE BEEN UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASED. THESE 74, 51 OF WHOM ARE FREE ON BAIL, HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH VARIOUS OFFENSES RANGING FROM LESE MAJESTE, RIOTING, UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS AND RESISTING ARREST. THE 23 STILL UNDER DETENTION ARE BEING TREATED HUMANELY.

--THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS EXTENDED HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MORE THAN 130,000 INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WHO FLED TO THAILAND. OVER 80,000 REMAIN IN THAILAND. DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL SOCIAL, FINANCIAL, AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS FOR THAILAND, THE GOVERNMENT IS MAKING A NOTEWORTHY HUMAN RIGHTS CONTRIBUTION TO THIS URGENT PROBLEM. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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